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FROM USMISSION UNESCO PARIS

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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [UNESCO](#) [SCUL](#) [KPAO](#)
SUBJECT: USUNESCO: THIRD WORKING GROUP SESSION ON THE RIGHT TO THE
CITY OUTLINES ACTION PLAN FOR THE NEXT TWO YEARS

REF: PARIS 7462

11. Summary: Participants in the Third Working Group Session on the "Right to the City," a joint project between UNESCO and UN Habitat, developed a project plan for the next two years leading up to the Nanjing, China World Urban Forum in 2008. Participants agreed to undertake regional inventories of existing legal and normative frameworks, to develop a tool kit to present to cities, and to develop criteria and guidelines for an award to be presented at the World Urban Forum to a city accomplishing the key goals of the "Right to the City" (inclusiveness and good governance). Participants debated the continued usage of the title "Right to the City," as it may be contentious for some states. End Summary.

12. The Third Working Group Session for the UNESCO-UN Habitat "Right to the City" project took place at UNESCO Paris on November 11th-12th, 2006. Organized by both UNESCO's Social and Human Science sector and Culture sector, NGOs and city representatives sought to develop ideas for action to be undertaken over the next two years. Although the "Right to the City" is a joint project between UNESCO and UN Habitat, no representative from UN Habitat was present.

13. Participants debated performing regional inventories of existing normative and legal instruments as well as regional best practices to provide cities with better guidelines of what can be done and what cities are already doing to achieve the goals linked to the "Right to the City" project. Annali Kristiansen, project manager with the Danish Institute of Human Rights, offered to produce a paper outlining relevant international instruments. Participants recognized the ambitious character of this next step of action, agreeing on a tentative deadline of September 2007 to have the preliminary inventories completed.

14. The working group plans to have a first draft tool kit ready for

the Nanjing conference. The tool kit will serve as a pedagogical tool for interested cities seeking to establish inclusiveness and good governance. Brigitte Colin, program specialist in the Social and Human Sciences sector, explained that the goal is to present a first draft tool kit that includes information on best practices and comparative studies of tools for achieving the objectives related to the "Right to the City" project. The regional inventories project will assist in successfully completing this tool kit. (Comment: It continues to remain entirely unclear what the goals of the "Right to the City" are.)

15. Participants discussed the creation of an award to be presented to a city boasting inclusiveness and good governance. Melody Hook, an NGO representative, said that with little time and resources, it could be difficult to properly develop criteria for the award in time for the Nanjing conference. Brigitte Colin reminded the working group that the Creative Cities program in the Culture sector was not completely developed when it was launched; however, the program achieved great visibility and was well received. She argued that similar outcomes are possible for this award. She also advised that this award should be created through UN Habitat under the auspices of UNESCO to avoid the bureaucratic steps that must be undertaken within UNESCO to obtain approval for the creation of a new award. Participants discussed the duties that cities should be entrusted with if they win, i.e. sharing their best practices with other cities. Participants addressed the difficulty of determining which actors would receive the award, the ensemble of actors within the city, or the municipal government alone. Most agreed that the former would better serve the objectives of the award.

16. Participants questioned the continued usage of the name "Right to the City" for this project. Sri Husnaini Sofjan, of the Hairou Commission located in Southeast Asia, and Annali Kristiansen mentioned that from their experiences working with China, this title may not be acceptable. Brigitte Colin and Annali Kristiansen agreed that if the current title is too thought-provoking and contentious to be accepted worldwide, perhaps a new title should be created. Brigitte Colin underscored the political aspect of this title, saying that member states with both UN agencies need to be supportive of the title for the project to be successful. Other participants (mainly NGOs) were not in accordance, arguing that adjustments to the title would decrease its "binding" effect. (Comment: This is coming after U.S. efforts to stop the use of the expression "Right to the City," see reftel. In discussions with the Secretariat, the U.S. has strongly objected to the use of the

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term.)

17. Charles Goldblum, a professor from the French Institute of Urbanism, suggested constructing an observatory for the "Right to the City." Participants debated the purpose of the observatory, funding, the center's scope within the world, and a timeframe for its creation. Jules Patenaude, public consultant working with the city of Montreal, countered that a virtual center would be more affordable, easier to maintain, and would reach out to a larger portion of the world. In addition, he and other participants said that many universities, agencies, and cities already have centers doing research on urban issues. They advised that partnerships and networking with these existing entities would perhaps be more useful.

18. Jun Morohashi, assistant program specialist in the Social and Human Science sector, proposed creating a concept paper that would define the work of the "Right to the City" project and outline a methodology for achieving goals. Brigitte Colin suggested continuing building partnerships and networking with other stakeholders. Melody Hook insisted on the need for a draft action plan and a position paper to define objectives, goals, resources, future action, etc. Brigitte Colin responded saying that these items must be shared with UN Habitat.

19. Cezar Busatto, Secretary of the Municipal Government of Porto Alegre, Brazil; Olivier Chambar, General Secretary of the International Association of Francophone Mayors; and Jean Jacques Joucla, mayor of the Paris suburb Montreuil, shared their experiences on how local governments can engage in building cities which are more inclusive for all residents and seek to build greater

levels of cohesion. Cezar Busatto argued that cities are unique throughout the world and that as this project seeks to promote best practice sharing and capacity building, it is important to recognize that one model cannot be adopted and forced upon all cities. He insisted that cities must be allowed to use these tools in a way that best serves their own system. Representatives from NGOs gave interventions on ways in which their organizations contribute to achieving the goals in line with the objectives of the "Right to the City." Rosa Maria Guerreiro, of the UNESCO Culture sector, discussed the social problems affecting cities, a phenomenon now negatively impacting the utopian ideal of an "interculturality hub" that cities are supposed to represent. She offered examples of Brazilian cities like Rio de Janeiro and Brasilia, where social cohesion does not exist.

10. Cezar Busatto offered to host a conference in Porto Alegre, to be held in September 2007, on good governance and inclusive practices at the municipal level. He recognized that the conference would need funding from UN Habitat, UNESCO, and other interested agencies.

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